



# WOMEN VETERANS' NETWORK

## Annual Luncheon & Information Fair



***RADM Vivien Crea, U.S.C.G.***

The Women Veterans' Network proudly announces that Rear Admiral Vivien Crea, Commander, First Coast Guard District will be the keynote speaker at its Luncheon on **April 24, 2003**, at the Radisson Hotel in Milford. RADM Crea is the first woman to head one of

the Coast Guard's nine districts and is the first female career officer to be promoted to Admiral.

RADM Crea is a Coast Guard aviator who has flown C130 Hercules turboprop, H-65 Dolphin helicopters, and a Gulfstream II jet. She earned a master's degree from MIT and from Central Michigan University; and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Texas. Her personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (three awards), and the Meritorious Service Medal.

At your request we are bringing back the Information Fair before the Luncheon. Agencies and organizations serving women veterans will staff tables or make information available. The Information Fair will last from 11:30 till 12:30, at which time the Luncheon will begin.

There is an \$18.00 charge for the baked chicken lunch. Reservations are required, the deadline is **April 17, 2003**. See page 3 for the Luncheon Reservation Form. If you have questions, please contact Heidi Kruckenberg at 617-727-3578, Ext. 316. When we receive your paid reservation, we will reply with your meal ticket and directions to the Radisson Hotel. Come, wear your uniforms and hats, and plan to have a good time!

## Guarding Our Interests

The women of the Massachusetts National Guard are serving their nation, state, and communities with pride and fidelity. Currently, over 1,200 women serve in the Massachusetts National Guard as soldiers and airmen. These women guard airports, infrastructure, and bases; drive and maintain vehicles; command units; pilot aircraft; and administer health services both here and abroad.

Why do women serve in the National Guard? They may join to take advantage of the benefits offered—the 100% free tuition at state colleges, the federal tuition assistance program, student loan repayment programs, commissary and PX privileges, bonuses, travel, and retirement pay. However, they know that their commitment is far more than one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer.

Women in all walks of life perform a balancing act maintaining family relationships, friendships, careers, health, and education. For women in the Armed Forces there is an even greater demand with the imminent threat of war. This is evident at deployment ceremonies where we have witnessed women who must leave their families behind. It is poignant to watch some who leave babies to serve their country for an unknown period of time. Though these women may go off with some sadness, they also go with great dedication. Patriotism has no gender barrier.



***Soldiers from the 726th Maintenance Battalion in Natick salute at their sendoff ceremony on Feb. 16, 2003.***

Here at the Headquarters in Milford, our staff performs critical tasks such as ensuring that all soldiers and airmen are prepared physically, fiscally, logistically, and legally before a deployment. (Continued on page 3.)

## -VA Updates -

### **Homeless Women Veterans Outreach and Case Management Program**

The VA has helped over 140 homeless women veterans over the past two years by means of the Homeless Women Veterans Outreach and Case Management Program at the VA Boston. These homeless and at-risk homeless women have received help in housing searches, primary care, and mental health care at the VA's specialized women's clinics. The VA has also advocated for clients in housing court; assisted them with other federal, state, and local veterans' benefits; and driven them to appointments. Finally, the VA made referrals to TRUST house, the first transitional residence for female veterans in the country. Outreach is provided to women at the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans, other area shelters, and at other social service agencies.



*Meredith Powers & Lauren Dever administer the program*

A research study in conjunction with this program has been designed to determine how services provided by the program affect psychological symptoms and other problems related to homelessness.

VA is committed to providing these services to homeless women veterans for at least three years. If you have any questions about our services or would like to make a referral, please contact us at 617-232-9500, Ext. 4027 or Ext. 4940.

*By Lauren Dever, LICSW and Meredith Powers, LICSW, Clinical Administrators*

### **Therapy Study for Women Veterans with PTSD**

The Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Team at the Boston VA Healthcare System is part of a study comparing two forms of psychotherapy for women veterans with PTSD. The study involves an initial psychological assessment. Enrolled participants will then be randomly assigned to one of the two treatments and will receive 10 sessions of individual therapy with a female therapist. Follow-up interviews will be given three times after the treatment has ended. For more information, please call Jennifer Jensen at 617-232-9500, Ext. 6027.

### **VA CARES Process in Massachusetts**

Simply stated, CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) is a study to evaluate the best ways to provide health care services to more veterans in more locations in the next 20 years. This national study was initiated to address projected changes in veterans' population—their locations and medical needs—so that duplication in services can be eliminated.

Part of the CARES process involves Planning Initiatives that identify gaps between current supply and future demand through 2022. Based on current and projected demand for the VA New England Healthcare System, several Planning Initiatives were identified for facilities in Massachusetts. These include: increase inpatient medicine capacity, increase specialty care outpatient capacity, decrease inpatient psychiatry capacity, increase primary care capacity, and in some areas integrate facilities that are within 60 miles of each other.

The VA wants input from stakeholders about the CARES process. You can share your opinion online at [www.va.gov/CARES](http://www.va.gov/CARES); or by contacting Deane Keefe, Public Affairs, by mail to Boston VA Medical Center, 150 S. Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02130 or by phone, 617-232-9500, Ext. 5279.

### **Did You Know?**

Did you know that each VA has a Women Veterans' Program Manager? The Women Veterans' Program Manager (formerly the Women Veterans' Coordinator) can assist you with access to care and answer questions about services available to you. The Women Veterans' Program Manager is a nurse or social worker trained to ensure quality of care, privacy, and safety within the healthcare environment. She can provide you with information about medical, mental health, and specialty care within the VA system in New England. The Women Veterans' Program Manager is also your advocate. Please call the Women Veterans' Program Manager closest to you with questions about your eligibility and/or services; see page 4 for a complete listing for Massachusetts.



*Patricia Robinson*

*By Patricia Robinson, Women Veterans' Program Manager*

## \* ANNUAL WOMEN'S LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM \*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Luncheon cost is \$18.00 per person.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*Tables may be reserved with purchase of 10 tickets.*

Guests: \_\_\_\_\_ (please include names)

I am a woman veteran ☐ I am reserving a table for: \_\_\_\_\_ (group name)

**Baked Chicken Lunch** includes salad, vegetable, roll, dessert and a beverage \$18.00 each

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ meal(s) at \$18.00 each.

Make checks payable to:

Department of Veterans' Services

Mail this form with your check to:

Heidi Kruckenberg  
Women Veterans' Network  
Department of Veterans' Services  
239 Causeway Street, Suite 100  
Boston, MA 02114

**Date:** April 24th  
**Location:** Radisson Hotel  
Milford, MA

Questions—contact Heidi Kruckenberg, Assistant, Women Veterans' Network at 617-727-3578, Ext. 316.

**DEADLINE APRIL 17<sup>th</sup>**

**SORRY NO REFUNDS**

### Guarding Our Interests

*Continued from page 1.*

These highly competent troops work with each soldier to make sure that he or she is physically ready to deploy and that he or she has made the right financial and family care plans to support his or her family while away on duty.

Thanks to you, the women veterans who have served and continue to serve our country, we have a model of excellence and dedication to follow. It is because of your sacrifices and pioneering efforts that women have the opportunity to serve their country with pride and distinction.

*By LTC Cheryl L. Poppe, Deputy Director of Personnel  
Massachusetts Army National Guard*

### Upcoming Events for Women Veterans

#### **Summer Chicken Cookout**

**Date:** Sunday, June 22, 2003, noon-4 P.M.

**Location:** Whitman VFW, Essex Street, Whitman, MA

**Contact:** Jeri Rumsis, 508-583-4500, Ext. 3133

*\* advanced registration required, price \$8.00 \**

#### **18th Annual Women Veterans' Luncheon**

**Date:** Sunday, October 19, 2003

**Location:** Lombardo's restaurant, Randolph, MA

**Hosted by** Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans  
*more information in Fall 2003 newsletter*

### VA Creates New Priority Group 8

WASHINGTON — The VA Health Care Programs Enhancement Act, signed into law in January 2002, required Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to create a new category of veterans that takes into consideration the high costs of living in many parts of the United States.

Under the new system, VA will use two priority groups—Priority Groups 7 and 8—to replace the current Priority 7 group. The new Priority 7 group will consist of veterans who have no service-connected disability rating. Veterans in the new Priority 7 must have incomes that exceed VA's national income threshold (\$24,644 in 2003 for a single veteran, \$29,576 for a veteran with a single dependent) but are below a geographically based income threshold set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for public housing benefits. Information about the HUD threshold is available at <http://www.hud.gov/renting/phprog.cfm>.

All other veterans who previously were in Priority Group 7 will be in a new Priority Group 8. Veterans in the new Priority Group 7 will pay only 20 percent of the current hospital copayments, effective retroactively to October 1, 2002. There is no reduction in copayments for outpatient care or pharmaceuticals. Call 800-827-1000 with questions.

*Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, New Release*

3 December 26, 2002

Telephone: (617) 727-3578 Ext. 316

FAX: (617) 727-5903

Department of Veterans' Services  
Attn: Women Veterans' Network  
239 Causeway Street, Suite 100  
Boston, MA 02114

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**Greater Boston Community Voicemail**



Project Connect Phonebank provides personal voice mail boxes for anyone in the Greater Boston community who does not have access to a telephone. Participants receive a unique, seven-digit telephone number that works much like a home answering machine, 24-hour access to messages, and a toll-free number to connect to messages. A competitive rate of as low as \$4 per month is available. Call Project Connect Phonebank for an appointment and more information, 617-248-6585. Project Connect is a program of Shelter Inc., [www.shelterinc.org](http://www.shelterinc.org).

**Seeking Home Economists with Military Service**

Are you a Home Economist who served in the military? If so, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the International Federation for Home Economists-US is looking for you. They are preparing for the 100th Anniversary celebration in 2008-2009.

Female veterans should contact Janet Gibbs to submit their name: 485 Meadowview Road, Athens, GA 30606, or by email: [jangibbs@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jangibbs@ix.netcom.com).

**Pioneer Valley WAVES Unit 81**

The Pioneer Valley WAVES National Unit 81 is seeking women in Western Mass. who served in the sea services, including WAVES, Navy nurses, SPARS, and Marines of all eras. The unit's focus is to inform members of veterans' benefits and services and to serve women veterans in retirement or health care facilities.

Unit 81 meets on the third Saturday of the month six times a year. The next meeting will be March 15, 2003, at 10:30 A.M. at American Legion Post 328 in Chicopee. For more information, please call membership chairperson Doris Duxbury Mansur (413-739-0348) or president Carolyn Strom Prunier (413-863-4796).

**VA Women Veterans' Program Managers**

Bedford

Kendra Kiely, LICSW, 781-687-2706

Jamaica Plain

Patricia Robinson, LICSW, 617-232-9500, Ext. 4120

Brockton & West Roxbury

Diane Harness-DiGloria, RN, ANP, 508-583-4500, Ext. 1435

Northampton

Marie Rohan, RN, 413-584-4040, Ext. 2230

Pam Williams, RN, 413-584-4040, Ext. 2018